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Journal of Threatened Taxa

Building evidence for conservation globally

www.threatenedtaxa.org

ISSN 0974-7907 (Online) | ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)

NOTE

THE NEPAL PIPEWORT *ERIOCAULON NEPALENSE* VAR. *LUZULIFOLIUM* (COMMELINIDS: POALES: ERIOCAULACEAE): A NEW DISTRIBUTION RECORD FOR SOUTHERN INDIA

Murugan Soumya & Maya C. Nair

26 April 2019 | Vol. 11 | No. 6 | Pages: 13811–13814

DOI: 10.11609/jott.4759.11.6.13811-13814



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**THE NEPAL PIPEWORT *ERIOCAULON NEPALENSE*
VAR. *LUZULIFOLIUM* (COMMELINIDS: POALES:
ERIOCAULACEAE): A NEW DISTRIBUTION RECORD
FOR SOUTHERN INDIA**

Murugan Soumya¹  & Maya Chandrasekaran Nair² 

¹ Environmental Resources Research Centre, Peroorkkada, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala 695005, India.

² Post Graduate and Research Department of Botany, Govt. Victoria College (University of Calicut), Palakkad, Kerala 678001, India.

¹ soumyamurugan@gmail.com (corresponding author),

² drmayadhoni@gmail.com

The genus *Eriocaulon* L. (Eriocaulaceae) is one of the diverse genera distributed in the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. Linnaeus (1753), while enumerating the genus *Eriocaulon*, recognised four species, of which three were from India. Ansari & Balakrishnan (1994) described 65 species from India and categorised them under 12 sections in their revision of Indian Eriocaulaceae. Ansari & Balakrishnan (2009) further revised the genus and reported 80 species from India. Since then more species have been described from southern India by subsequent floristic explorations (Yadav et al. 2008; Shimpale et al. 2009; Vivek et al. 2010; Nampy et al. 2011; Swapna et al. 2012; Rashmi & Krishnakumar 2014; Manudev et al. 2015; Sunil et al. 2015; Anto & Resma 2017; Darshetkar et al. 2017; Kumar et al. 2017; Manudev et al. 2017; Sunil et al. 2017).

During the floristic exploration in the Kollengode range of forests in Nemmara Forest Division of southern Western Ghats, we came across an interesting specimen of *Eriocaulon* growing in the Manpara region

of Nelliampathy Hills and was identified as *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* (Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn., hitherto unknown from any of the southern Indian states.



ISSN 0974-7907 (Online)
ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)

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***Eriocaulon nepalense*
var. *luzulifolium***

(Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn. in Kew Bull. 67: 664. 2012

Eriocaulon luzulifolium (sphalm.: *luzulaefolium*) Mart. in Wall., Pl. Asiat. Rar. 3: 28. 1832; Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 582. (1893). *Eriocaulon pumilio* Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 6: 581. 1893; *Eriocaulon lepidum* T. Koyama, Philipp. J. Sci. 84: 371. 1956. *Eriocaulon papuanum* P. Royen, Nova Guinea, Bot. 10: 37. 1959. *Eriocaulon kathmanduense* Satake, Bull. Univ. Mus. Univ. Tokyo 2: 157. 1971. *Eriocaulon pseudonepalense* Satake, Acta Phytotax. Geobot. 26: 50. 1974.

Acaulescent herbs. Root stock conical, 2.5–3 cm × 0.81cm. Leaves rosulate, oblong-lanceolate, apiculate up to 9–12 cm × 0.8–1.5 cm, glabrous. Sheaths up to 6–7 cm long, glabrous, margin entire, limb apex split into 2 or 3 acute lobes. Peduncles 16–18 in number, erect upto 21–25 cm, 6-ribbed. Heads ovoid, 3mm × 5mm across, pale black or grey. Receptacle ovoid, pilose. Involucral bracts 1.5mm × 1.2mm, orbicular – obovate, lacerate, grey-coloured, glabrous. Floral bracts 2mm × 0.85mm, oblanceolate, acuminate, hoary towards tip, black. Male flowers: pedicel 0.5mm long, sepals obovate, connate into a spathe at the base, upper portion divided into three acute lobes, hoary towards tip, black. Petals 3, acuminate, minute. Anthers 6, globose, black. Female flowers: Pedicel 0.3–0.4 mm

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11609/jott.4759.11.6.13811-13814>

Editor: N.P. Balakrishnan, Coimbatore, India.

Date of publication: 26 April 2019 (online & print)

Manuscript details: #4759 | Received 12 December 2018 | Final received 13 February 2019 | Finally accepted 01 April 2019

Citation: Soumya, M. & M.C. Nair (2018). The Nepal Pipewort *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* (Commelinids: Poales: Eriocaulaceae): a new distribution record for southern India. *Journal of Threatened Taxa* 11(6): 13811–13814; <https://doi.org/10.11609/jott.4759.11.6.13811-13814>

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Funding: Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), Govt. of Kerala.

Competing interests: The authors declare no competing interests.



Acknowledgements: The first author is thankful to Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment (KSCSTE), Govt. of Kerala for the financial support by way of its Fellowship in Taxonomy. The authors are thankful to (Late) Dr. P.K.K. Nair, Former Director, Dr. G. Achuthan Nair, Director, Dr. P.K. Shaji, Deputy Director and Scientist, ERRC for their helpful suggestions and encouragement. Maya C. Nair would like to thank the Director of Collegiate Education, Govt. of Kerala and Principal, Govt. Victoria College Palakkad for their support and encouragement.

long. Sepals 3, 1.7mm long, free, similar, linear, acute, hoary towards apex, black. Petals 3, equal, hyaline, 1.5mm long, eglandulose, stipitate between sepals and petals. Ovary 0.3mm, sub-sessile, ovoid, style 0.2mm, stigma 0.3mm, 3 fid. Seeds ellipsoid, 0.5mm × 0.2mm, yellow, cells of seed coat transversely elongated, aligned in vertical rows, appendages 1–4 from the middle of transverse radial walls. Appendages setiform, retuse at the apex (Image 1).

Phenology: August–October.

Habitat: This plant was observed in waterlogged areas in evergreen forests.

Specimen examined: 1126 (ERRC), 177799 (MH), 25.ix.2015, India, Kerala, Palakkad District, Kollengode range, Manpara, 10.522°N & 76.747°E, 1275m, coll. Soumya & Maya (Image 2).

Distribution: Thailand, Nepal-Himalaya to southern China, New Guinea, Srilanka, India (Assam, Manpara (Nelliampathy Hills) of Kerala part of the Western Ghats).

Conservation status: Field explorations revealed that the plant taxon is rare in occurrence and only a single population with a small number of individuals inhabiting the Manpara region of Kollengode range forests was found. Analysing the global distribution informed that the plant taxa is observed to thrive in humid climatic conditions of higher altitudes above 1000m. The current status of the species is assigned to be Least Concern as per IUCN Version 2018-2 (IUCN 2018).

Additional specimens examined: Kew digital herbarium barcode ID: K000098620, K000098635 and K000098704.

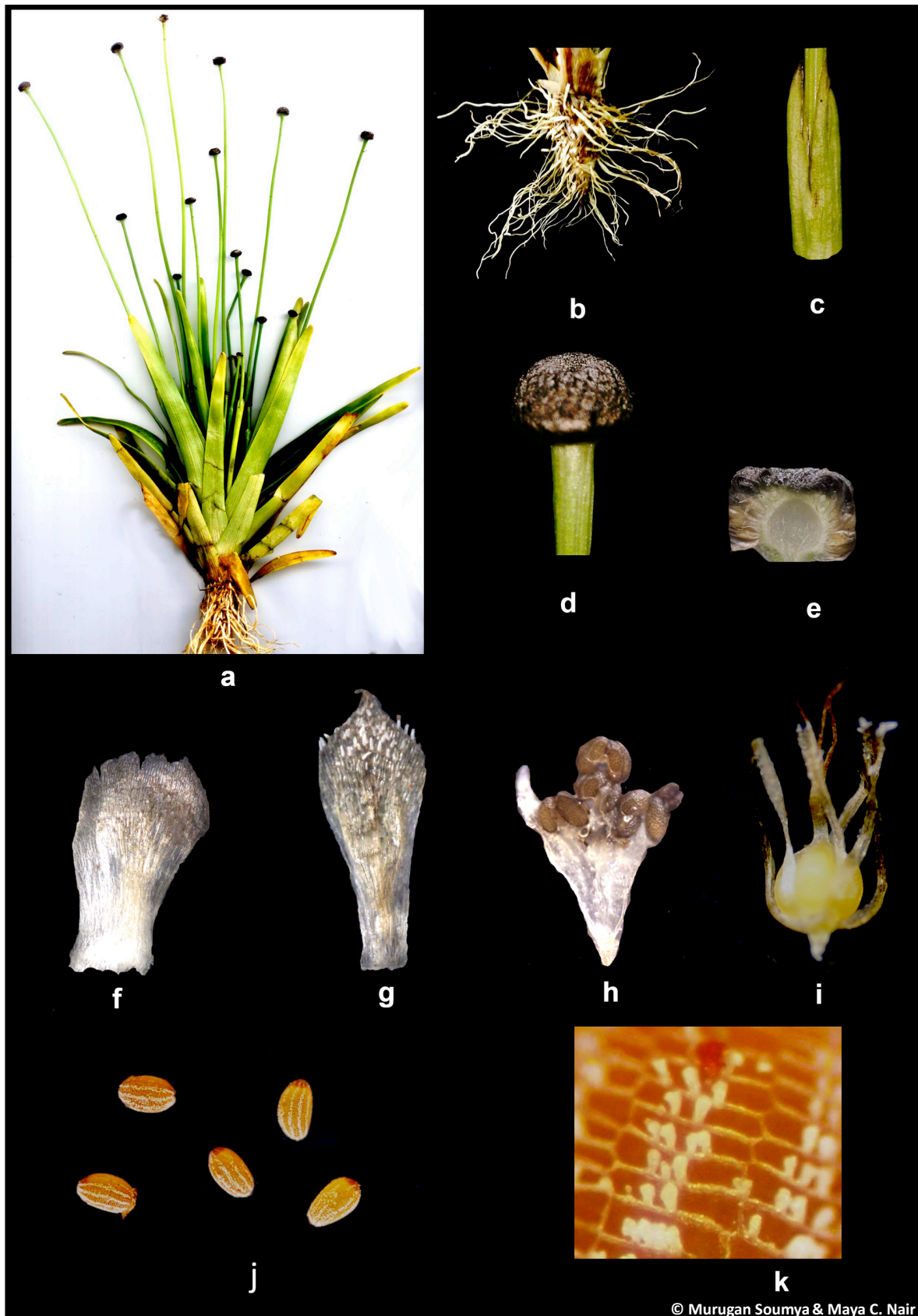
Nomenclature notes: *Eriocaulon nepalense* Prescott ex Bong. and *Eriocaulon luzulifolium* Mart. were described as separate species in *Mém. Acad. Imp. Sci. St.-Pétersbourg, Sér. 6, Sci. Math.* (1830) and *Pl. Asiat. Rar.* (1832), respectively. Later on Prajaksood et al. (2012) proposed a new combination, *Eriocaulon nepalense* Prescott ex Bong. var. *luzulifolium* (Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn. comb. et stat. nov. The specific epithets *Eriocaulon luzulifolium* Mart., *Eriocaulon pumilio* Hook. f., *Eriocaulon lepidum* T. Koyama, *Eriocaulon papuanum* P. Royen, *Eriocaulon kathmanduense* Satake, *Eriocaulon pseudonepalense* Satake were treated as synonyms. It is also noted that, as per IPNI, *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* (Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn. is the correct name and *Eriocaulon luzulifolium* Mart. forms the basionym from which the name of variety 'luzulifolium' was derived.

Taxonomic delineation from *Eriocaulon nepalense* Prescott ex Bong.: The specimen differs from the typical variety in having acute leaf apex, entire margin and more or less pilose receptacle. Root stock is elongated, stout and densely fibrous. Prajaksood et al. (2012) observed that the distribution of *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* is wider than the typical variety and the morphology of the taxon is influenced by growth conditions.

Taxonomic delineation of *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* from the other taxa recognised in the 'Flora of Presidency of Madras': The taxon *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* (Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn. has not been enlisted in the Flora of Presidency of Madras.

Table 1. Taxonomic delineation of *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* (Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn. from the other taxa recognized in the 'Flora of Presidency of Madras'.

Characters	<i>E. nepalense</i> var. <i>luzulifolium</i> (Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn.	Taxa compared
Habitat	Terrestrial waterlogged areas	<i>E. setaceum</i> L.—Aquatic plant in which stems remain submerged, and only the peduncles emerge out of water
Nature of sheath	The apex of sheath is split into 2 or 3 acute lobes.	<i>E. longicuspis</i> Hook. f. var. <i>polycephala</i> Fyson & <i>E. odoratum</i> Dalz.—The mouth of the sheath enclosing the leaves were distinctly oblique and closed
Number of peduncles	About 16-18 peduncles	<i>E. pectinatum</i> Ruhl. & <i>E. robustum</i> Steud.—Usually solitary peduncle
Number of ribs in peduncle	Six ribs	<i>E. quinquangulare</i> L., <i>E. collinum</i> Hook. f. & <i>E. conicum</i> Fischer—Five, Five-Eight and Five respectively.
Receptacle	Pilose	<i>E. melaleucum</i> Mart., <i>E. ritchieanum</i> Ruhl. & <i>E. truncatum</i> Ham., <i>E. sieboldianum</i> Sieb & Zucc—Glabrous
Involucral bracts and flowers	Involucral bracts were not longer than floral bracts	<i>E. diana</i> Fyson, <i>E. diana</i> var. <i>longibracteata</i> Fyson, <i>E. diana</i> var. <i>richardiana</i> Fyson & <i>E. xeranthemum</i> Mart.—Involucral bracts were longer than floral bracts and flowers
Nature of involucral bract	Glabrous	<i>E. brownianum</i> Mart. var. <i>nilagirensis</i> , <i>E. robusto-brownianum</i> Ruhl. & <i>E. lanceolatum</i> Miq.—Pilose
Colour of involucral bract	Grey	<i>E. margaretae</i> Fyson & <i>E. elenora</i> Fyson—Hyaline
Number of sepals	Three	<i>E. cuspidatum</i> Dalz., <i>E. stellulatum</i> Koern., <i>E. sexangulare</i> L., <i>E. ensiforme</i> Fischer, <i>E. vanheurckii</i> Muell. Arg., <i>E. minutum</i> Hook. f., <i>E. thwaitesii</i> Koern. & <i>E. gamblei</i> Fischer—Two



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Image 1. *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* (Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn.: a - habit | b - root stock | c - limb apex | d - head | e - head LS | f - involucre bract | g - floral bract | h - male flower | i - female flower | j - seed | k - seed surface enlarged showing appendage.

The combination of characters such as presence of rootstock, split leaf sheath apex, 6-ribbed peduncle, 16–18 peduncles, pilose receptacle, grey coloured glabrous involucre bract, three male sepal lobes, presence of black anthers and seed coat surface with 1–4 appendages from the middle of transverse radial walls clearly demarcates this from the other allied taxa in the genus *Eriocaulon*. Table 1 summarizes the critical comparison of *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* with 29 taxa under the genus *Eriocaulon* (comprising 25 species and 4 varieties) enumerated in the Flora of Presidency of Madras (Gamble 1915–1936).

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Image 2. Herbarium of *Eriocaulon nepalense* var. *luzulifolium* (Mart.) Praj. & J. Parn.



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ISSN 0974-7907 (Online) | ISSN 0974-7893 (Print)

April 2019 | Vol. 11 | No. 6 | Pages: 13631–13814

Date of Publication: 26 April 2019 (Online & Print)

DOI: 10.11609/jott.2019.11.6.13631-13814

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